

## SOME MORE ENTOMOLOGISTS.\*

By J. R. DE LA TORRE-BUENO, Tucson, Arizona

Foremost among American entomologists of my passing generation stands Dr. Leland Ossian Howard, who has honored me with his friendship these forty years and more. Wit, raconteur, diplomat, and the leading economic entomologist world-wide, as successor to Dr. C. V. Riley, to whom he was assistant, Dr. Howard recreated the U. S. Bureau of Entomology into one of the great and most useful elements of the Department of Agriculture, during his 50 years of service, most of them as Chief of the Bureau. He always stood a friend even to the most recalcitrant of his subordinates, some of them even unfrinds. He was liberal and just to all his subordinates and even blind to departmental pécadillos—anyone can violate the book of rules for the proper conduct of government employees, in some minute detail. Dr. Howard always encouraged independent work and publication among his staff; and did not sign his own name to other people's work. Many of his tales of entomology and entomologists are told in his three books of reminiscences. But the real enjoyment of these stories is in listening to him telling them with joy and a dry wit. Personally, he is rather short with quite a bald head and a charming crooked smile. There were other entomologists of great attainments during his active service, but none had so powerful an impact on world-wide study of harmful insects, not alone in this country but likewise in Europe, perhaps to a greater degree than here.

As I think back, I have known personally all, or nearly all, the great figures of American entomology in my day—the great Dr. John Henry Comstock of Cornell and his most charming wife, Anna Botsford Comstock; Dr. James G. Needham, Drs. Matheson, Johannsen, Bradley, and a host of others in Dr. Comstock's department; Dr. Herbert Osborn, of Ohio State, kindly and fine; sweet Charles W. Leng, who in the passing years arose to be one of our greatest American students of beetles; William T. Davis, world authority on Cicadas, sweet singers of the groves, and, in my mind, one of our great field naturalists and interpreters of nature; Edward P. Van Duzee, at the time of his death the outstanding hemipterist of the world, both in his studies and in their high quality. A host of other names comes to my mind as I write: Alexander and

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\* Mr. Bueno died in May 3, 1948. This article written in 1944 was found among his papers.

Crampton of Massachusetts College at Amherst; Hungerford of Lawrence, Kans.; Drake and Knight of Iowa State; Funkhouser of Lexington, Ky., entomologist and archaeologist; Grafe, Grote, Doll, Schaeffer, Beutenmuller, Blatchley, Tale, Engelhardt, Barber, Lutz, John B. Smith of New Jersey, E. D. Ball of Arizona—each remarkable in his chosen field. And I must not forget that other great naturalist Raymond L. Ditmars who started as an entomologist and became our great American authority on reptiles.

Of the great foreign entomologists, my acquaintance is naturally among hemipterists (by interperetation, students of the sucking bugs). Two of them I knew personally and maintained a long correspondence with them—Dr. Geza Horvath, of Budapest, and Dr. Evald Bergroth of Finland. By correspondence I knew the greatest of them all, the late Dr. Odo Morannal Reuter, of Helsingfors, Finland; and (lacuna) of London, who wrote the one great book on Biology of the Hemiptera; Dr. W. L. Distant, curator of Hemiptera in the British Museum, and his present successor, Mr. W. E. China. Dr. Reuter, beyond being a student of insects had another and wider claim to greatness—he was the great modern epic poet of Finland.

Dr. Horvath was Director of the Hungarian National Museum and one of the four great in the study of the Hēmiptera. It was my privilege to know him personally in 1907, when he was in the United States in attendance at the great International Zoological Congress in Boston. Because of my correspondence with him and because of my pioneer work in neglected fields, he came to visit me for a day in White Plains (at 96 Central Avenue). White Plains then was the largest incorporated village in the United States (6,000 people). Nearby the town there were pleasant bosky woods, rich lush meadows, clear ponds among the trees, hillsides gay with flowers in spring, and dark little cattail and rush swamps, with clear rills running through the tussocks, and brawling brooks and quiet streams across the meadows. And all these were certainly full of the most fascinating insects (to an entomologist). But within a few years allwas changed, and the pleasant face of nature was altered. Everywhere there were real estate developments; great parkways were laid out and landscaped and everything wild and lovely was abolished. Nature was refined and smoothed away; swamps were drained, and the songs of the red-winged blackbirds were stilled. Briar clumps where cotton-tail bunnies lay hid were dug up and smooth lawns installed, to be curry-combed the live-long

day by sweaty laborers. In a word, White Plains is now a city, wears a white collar and its hair is trimmed and slicked smooth.

Dr. Horvath at that time was short and you might almost say chubby, a man in his sixties. His face was round and faintly Asiatic; his hair iron-grey and cut more or less en brosse; and his suit had not been to the presser. But his manners were impeccable, with now and again unconscious lapses when something surprising and new showed up. He spoke Hungarian, German, French, Latin and other languages; I spoke only English, Spanish and some French; so our conversations were in the last, the one language common to us both. He spent a day or so at home with us; and he was in continuous excitement. It began at our home lunch-table; and my wife's art as confectioner of American food was the object of praise and questions. The high point of our simple meal came when an alligator pear (avocado, aguacate—not one of those California nubbins, but the big Cuban fruit) appeared on the table. Never in his life had Dr. Horvath seen one. He whipped out a small note book and a pencil and *very* apologetically asked if he might see it before it was cut. The green, smooth skin was examined carefully, and a note was made. It was cut; and the yellow-green buttery meat was likewise scrutinized and noted. Then the round big seed called for more notes; and finally, the seed was carefully wrapped up to be taken to Hungary, where it doubtless reposes in the museum collections. After lunch came the entrancing collecting in a close-by meadow, sunken and damp, with a streamlet in it. Whatever was not new to him, he had never before seen alive in nature. Swinging a big sweeping net—a heavy cotton cloth bag on a steel ring and with a big handle—he would fill it with meadow grasshoppers, spiders, beetles, caterpillars, bees of many kinds, wasps and bugs, everyone of which was either popped into a killing bottle or into a vial of alcohol, eventually to land in the collections of the Hungarian National Museum, where they may be seen labelled "White Plains, N. Y." Dr. Horvath lived to be 95, busy, productive and famous to the every last. His passing was a great loss to scientific entomology. But he is happy not to have lived to see the enslavement of his proud land and the downfall of that European culture and science he had spent a life-time in helping to erect into a splendid edifice.

Dr. Evald Bergroth, whom also I met personally, and with whom I corresponded for many years until his untimely death, was the great student of flies and a practising physician as well, at Ekenas, Finland. It was coincidental with the failure of the abortive upris-

ing against the Czar in Finland about 1908 that I was surprised to receive letters from him from Oregon. Not much later, other came from Duluth, Minn., and finally from Fitchburg, Mass. And suddenly, he showed up in White Plains, to spend one, or a part of one, day with me to see my collection. By the end of the day he had been able to examine in detail only about eight out of some hundred or more boxes full of bugs. He had to go, because his ship for Europe left that night or in the very early hours of the following morning. On leaving, he gave a deep regretful sigh, with a remark: "I had no idea you had such an important collection, Mr. Bueno". With him went to Abo some of my choice specimens; and by this time, in all the turmoil and destruction of wars and rebellions, they are lost to science. Dr. Bergroth was a sharp-set, decisive man who wore an imposing pince nez. He could be very acid indeed in characterizing the ineptitudes of his entomological fellows, in German, French and English, and I suppose in his native Finnish and possibly Russian, not to mention Latin, which he wrote.

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**A Necessary Change of Name (Hemiptera, Saldidae).—**

One of our common northern Saldids has long been known as *Salda coriacea* Uhler, 1872. This name, however, had earlier been used by Fabricius (1803, Syst. Rhyng., p. 115. 8) for a species originally described by himself in 1794 under the generic name *Acanthia*, and later transferred by Stal (1868, Hem. Fabr. I, p. 88) to the Mirid genus *Orthocephalus*.

It is not necessary to propose a new name for Uhler's species, as it was again described as new by Provancher in 1872, and may therefore be known as *Salda bouchervillei* (Provancher).—ROLAND F. HUSSEY, Lakeland, Florida.